

CLAIMS

1. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively

5 patentable inventions; and

(b) in exchange for transfers of property rights under patent rights to prospectively patentable inventions derived at least in part from the accumulated ideas, or in exchange for contractual obligations to transfer said property rights, providing contingent contractual rights to a portion of anticipated income derived from said property rights.

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2. A method according to Claim 1, wherein step (b) comprises the step of:

(c) providing said contingent contractual rights in an on-line format.

3. A method according to 1 or 2, further comprising the step of:

15 (c) marketing said contingent contractual rights.

4. A method according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein a computer system facilitates use of contributor computers to make on-line contributions of said ideas to the computer database; and wherein step (b) comprises the step of:

20 (d) providing said contingent contractual rights by on-line communications between the computer system and the contributor computers.

5. A method according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein said ideas include needs and/or requirements of said inventions.

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6. A method according to Claim 1 or 2, further comprising the step of:

(d) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to the database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas, wherein said transfer is for contingent economic gain.

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7. A method according to Claim 1 or 2, further comprising the step of:

(d) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas to transferees other than contributors of ideas from which said invention was at least in part derived, wherein said transfer is for contingent economic gain.

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8. A method according to Claim 1 or 2, further comprising the step of:

(d) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas to a proprietor of said database or to a party in concert with said proprietor, wherein said transfer is for contingent economic gain.

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9. A method according to Claim 1 or 2, further comprising the step of:

(d) establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas, wherein upon establishing said obligations the transferees are not identified, and wherein said transfer is for contingent economic gain.

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10. A method according to Claim 6, 7, 8 or 9, further comprising the step of:

(e) facilitating establishment of such obligations by on-line communications between a computer system maintained by a proprietor of the database and computers used by

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contributors of ideas to the database.

11. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein each step is performed systematically

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12. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the method of Claim 1.

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13. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the method of Claim 2.

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14. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the method of Claim 3.

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15. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the method of Claim 4.

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16. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the method of Claim 5.

17. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the method of Claim 6.

5 18. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the method of Claim 7.

10 19. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the method of Claim 8.

15 20. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the method of Claim 9.

21. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the method of Claim 10.

20 22. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the method of Claim 11.